



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### USAID and ZELS show how decentralization works in Macedonia

"My Municipality," an exhibition highlighting how Macedonian local governments are modernizing their operations, opened to mayors and government officials on Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at the Aleksandar Palace Hotel in Skopje. The interactive presentation of the tools the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided municipalities to assist with the decentralization process was part of a day of activities celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Association of Local Self Government Units (ZELS) and the successful implementation of USAID's latest project to support Macedonian municipalities. USAID is a part of the US Mission to Macedonia.

ZELS' 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary brought together former and current leaders of the organization to honor its past, to celebrate its present, and to plan its future. The event included remarks from the U.S. and EU Ambassadors to the Republic of Macedonia, Gillian Milovanovic and Erwan Fouere. Both have been strong supporters of ZELS and its role as the voice of local governments in Macedonia. Following these remarks, municipal officials and leaders presented to government and international community representatives how they use the USAID designed tax, finance, and urban planning systems to provide citizens with more efficient services. Exhibition of the management systems was coupled with displays of USAID's work in providing municipalities with small scale community infrastructure projects.

"Before us we see the fruits of three years of work in partnership with the municipalities and with ZELS," said William Althaus, USAID Decentralization Project Chief of Party. "Here you can see and experience the wonderful tools and systems developed by the partnership of the municipalities and USAID. Through its first phase, Decentralization is working and this is worthy of celebration."

As USAID and ZELS celebrate their joint successes, preparation is already underway for the next USAID local government support project in Macedonia that will build upon the accomplishments recognized today.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. Over 25 projects worth more than \$25 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic

and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>